

Poems
of
The Rank
And File



By
Bert and Lester Berry

611 416

POEMS OF
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AND FILE

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1.

DOING THEIR BIT

A mighty nation millions strong
That wanted a place in the sun,
Got started under Kaiser Bill
Four other powers to smash to nil.
They thought to do it in a week
But you know their plans sprung a leak,
And now we're out with shot and gun
To tame the wild man Mr. Hun.

The Belgians were the first to feel,
The German tyrant's iron heel,
But they put up a glorious scrap,
And ain't as yet wiped off the map.
And though their land ain't very big,
And they don't know the Irish jig,
Yet when they get a decent chance,
They'll make those hulking Germans dance.

The Englishman is on the job,
You just can bet your level bob,
And Germans have no blooming doubt,
Found him a long way from played out;
And though he is you know by jove,
A know-it-all sort of a blooming cove,
He'll fight and call it jolly fun
To make the bally German run.

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The Scotsman too is there ye ken,
From city, town and mountain glen,
He has just gone across the sea,
Near German folk to bide a wee,
And though he's stingy with the dough,
And dressed wee bit like lassies, Oh!
Yet let him use the bayonet
Then German roughnecks up and get.

The Irishman is far away,
From where the shamrocks greet the day,
He's there to show the Germans how,
An Irishman sure loves a row,
And though he'll argue like old Nick,
With every Harry, Tom or Dick,
Yet Germans when they with him meet,
Begorra some soon get cold feet.

The Frenchman he fight si vis plais,
For country he just love alway,
And he will yet the foeman lick
And o'er the Rhine the sourkrauts kick,
For though he uses par le vue,
When we'd rather he say "how do you do,"
Yet when the enemy with him meet,
They cry mercy and not mercie.

And boys who sing the Maple Leaf,
Have drawn the sword from out the sheaf,
To shew the world that they ain't slack,
In fighting for the Union Jack,
And though in numbers we are few
We're going to help see this thing through,
And teach the Germans how to sing,
Britannia rules, God save the King.

THE ATTACK

"Patricias, the dawn is breaking,
And the day will come too soon;
You're tired with heavy fighting,
In the rain-soaked trench and loam,
I know you'll fight like heroes
Against those Huns in grey,"
Were the words of our brave colonel
On that memorable day.

Daybreak; I see them coming,
Thousands and thousands strong,
I wonder shall we hold them,
I wonder how long—
They're falling now in hundreds,
But still they seem to come,
In overwhelming numbers,
A hundred to our one.

Their shells are bursting o'er us,
Their guns—they have our range,
And brave lads fall beside us;
My God, it seems so strange,
That such a little army
Could hold those Germans back,
Who wave on wave were coming
Like demons to attack.

My story now is ended—
Our boys they won the day—
And many a burly German
Out there on "No Man's" lay.
Reinforcements now had reached us
The end of the day has come
And the last words of our colonel
Were, "Bravo, lads, well done!"

3.

WELCOME AMERICA

Oh vast and mighty Nation,
Oh land of liberty,
Across the seas we're fighting
Against German tyranny.
A cry goes out from Belgium
To America o'er the sea
For well she knows you'll answer
Great Champion of Liberty.

America's sons have risen,
From the North, South, East and West,
To help rid little Belgium
Of an arrogant military pest.
They've heard the cry of their children
As they sank down in the deep,
For vengeance on the nation
That had murdered them in their sleep.

We welcome you America,
Into this world-wide War,
And for the German Kaiser
You've a great surprise in store.
We've watched your boys at drill,
We've watched your boys at play,
And with your President, Wilson,
You'll fight and win the day.

I WISH

I wish that he were here once more,
To see him smile, to clasp his hand,
To hear him say a thousand things
That he and I would understand.

I wish, sometimes, for but one glance
At his strong face which smiles for me
When in my dreams all distance melts
And back he comes o'er land and sea.

I wish that we walked side by side,
As we oft did at setting sun,
And talked of future happy days
Nor dreamt of wars that must be won.

I wish that in some hard fought game
I watched him play with heart of pride;
And caught a glimpse of flashing eye
Quick moving feet and powerful stride.

I wish, ah, yes! I wish all this,
For I'm a woman weak of heart,
And yet I let him go away!
Away to play a strong man's part.

And Tho' I wish all this, yet, still,
I wish him there where duty lies,
Where honor crowns his sunny head
And brave men march 'neath foreign skies.

5.

AFTER

After the night, the dawn of day,
After the rain, the sun's bright ray,
After the heat, the morning dew,
After the heartache, love and you.

After the toil, the night of rest,
After the pain, the hour that's best,
After the tears, the radiant smile,
After long years, you all the while.

6.

BABY

A little head, two tiny feet,
A little body, Oh! so sweet,
A little face, two bright blue eyes;
A bit of sunshine from the skies.

A little mind, a tiny brain,
A little soul that's free from stain,
A little heart to fill with love;
A little life from God above.

7.

SWEETHEART

On a ship at night, under stars so bright,
 Stood two soldiers side by side;
And one was dear to a maiden fair,
 And one a mother's pride;
But the call to go and meet the foe
 Came across the roiling main;
And they sailed away at the close of day
 While their hearts sang this refrain:

CHORUS:

Good-bye dear sweetheart,
 Farewell to you;
Some day I'll see you,
 When dreams come true.
To-night I'm sailing,
 Somewhere far away;
But I'll be dreaming ever
 Of you, night and day.

Many have to part with an aching heart,
 From the boys they love so well;
And though all the while they may bravely smile
 Their thoughts no one can tell;
And when their hearts yearn for their boy's return
 From the place that's far away;
Then they'll sing again the old refrain,
 That they sang on parting day.

OUR EMPIRE

There's an Empire whose Dominions reach out North,
South, East and West;
An Empire where, of all things dear, freedom is
loved the best;
With a host of sons and daughters ever loyal, brave
and true;
Who're fighting, toiling, helping her, to see the
world war through.

CHORUS:

God bless our Empire and the lads across the sea;
Keep them victorious wher'ere they may be.
God bless our women, they're the Empire's pride and
joy;
They've served her nobly, so says ev'ry soldier boy.

There's a flag that waves above us in this Empire,
great and wide,
A flag that stands for justice, truth, whatever may
betide;
Its the flag that's called the Union Jack a flag we'll
love for aye,
And as it waves serene above it somehow seems
to say:

FOR FREEDOM

Bugle calls are sounding, Sounding everywhere,
 Brave boys are enlisting, Boys we love so dear,
 Joining Allied Armies, Going across the sea,
 To strike a blow for freedom's sake, and win a
 victory.

REFRAIN:

For the boys who love a land of freedom,
 Are the boys who're fighting o'er the main,
 And we'll give them all a hearty welcome,
 When they return again.
 For although they're miles away from home-land,
 In the trench, on the sea, or shore,
 They seem nearer—because they're dearer
 Than they've ever been before.

Boys who love their country, Boys of splendid frame,
 Side by side are fighting, Freedom to retain;
 They don't mind the danger, on land or on the sea,
 So long as they can win the fight, the fight for liberty.

16.

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU SO

Hours are full of longing
Longing for you, dear,
Wondering where you're wandering
Wishing you were here;
Skies that once were blue, dear,
Now seem cold and grey,
Days seem just like ages
Since you went away.

CHORUS:

Underneath the silvery stars
You told your love to me,
Now you've left me all alone,
You thought to set me free;
Still I love you more and more,
Though years may come and go,
And I pray that you'll come back
Because I love you so.

Thinking of you often
Though you're far away,
Hoping, longing, praying,
Waiting for the day
When you'll come to me, dear,
Across the rolling tide,
And we'll walk at even
Once more side by side.

SET TO MUSIC

MY GIRL

A mother sat beside her boy one evening,
 A boy she loved as only mothers do,
 And heard him say that now a little maiden
 Had found a resting-place in his heart, too;
 And then her mother-heart was filled with sadness
 Through fear his choice might later prove unwise,
 Until he took her in his arms and kissed her,
 And said to her while love shone in his eyes:

CHORUS

My girl is just like you, dear,
 With smiling eyes of blue, dear,
 And hair that's wavy, too, dear,
 And heart that's fond and true;
 She has your own sweet way, dear,
 Sweet as the flowers in May, dear,
 She's like a sunshine ray, dear,
 'Cause she is just like you.

Three score of years have passed and in the twilight
 Just when the setting sun has gone to rest,
 An aged couple sat together dreaming
 Outside their little grey home in the West;
 And as the old man's thoughts went trailing back-
 wards
 'Cross happy years they have both lived side by
 side,
 He thought again of what he had told his mother
 About the one that was to be his bride:

12.

"OUT THERE"
(Somewhere in France)

Out where the bullets were flying fast, under the roar
of the guns;
Over the top thru the sleet and rain, march'd forth
our true Mothers Sons,
On to the fight for Democracy hurling themselves at
the foe;
In battle array they fought night and day, our
boys whom we all love so.

CHORUS:

Out There our boys fought for Freedom, under the
Red, White and Blue,
Fought for our good name and honor, with Allies
so steady and true—
Brave hearts who knew no surrender Veteran sons
are you,
Boys of the Army and Navy, we take our hats off
to you.

Back from the Front they're returning now back to
their sweethearts and wives,
Back to the Land of the brave and free under the
blue Western skies,
Never forget how they march'd away when duty
bade them all go,
In Belgium and France they fought side by side,
our boys whom we all love so.

SET TO MUSIC

DAYDREAMS

Somewhere out in the garden of daydreams
 There's a spot that is bordered by love,
 And the flowers there are ever the sweetest,
 Kissed by dew, and by sun, from above,
 And it's there that we oft go a roaming,
 In this garden of sweetest delight,
 And we dream of the days that are coming
 With their hopes, and their joys, ever bright.

REFRAIN:

Daydreams of love,
 Sunshine above,
 Skies of an ocean blue;
 Dreams of the day,
 You'll ever stay,
 No more to part with you.
 Daydreams of love,
 Sunshine above,
 Skies of an ocean blue;
 Dreams of the time,
 When you'll ever be mine
 And my daydreams will all come true.

In this garden of daydreams we wander,
 My dear sweetheart and I side by side;
 And forget time and space in our dreaming,
 Years of parting, and miles that divide.
 And the flowers shed their fragrance around us,
 And the birds sing their sweet songs above,
 As we walk hand in hand in our daydreams
 In the beautiful garden of love.

THE SPIRIT OF BRITAIN'S MEN

We heard of Great Britain's possessions,
Of her lands stretching far East and West,
We heard of her tonnage in shipping
Of her fleets that were reckoned the best;
But we never once heard of her manhood,
No whisper came to us then,
Of the greatest of all Britain's treasures,
The Spirit of Britain's men.

We worked with them there in the office,
We toiled with them out on the land,
Laboured in many a workshop
At tasks neither mighty nor grand;
And we never knew they were heroes,
We'd have laughed had you told us that then
For we knew not how splendid and glorious
Was the spirit of Britain's men.

We saw them at work and at play too,
We shared with them pleasure and toil.
We called them clerks, farmers and tradesmen,
Mechanics and sons of the soil;
But now by the one name we call them,
One we would not have thought of just then,
For we knew not how grand and heroic
Was the spirit of Britain's men.

They are fighting out there on the water,
They are fighting out there on the plain,
They are fighting above in the heavens
Fighting hard for old Britain's gain;
And they know not the word called surrender,
Even though they fight one against ten,
For there's something that none can conquer,
It's the spirit of Britain's men.

Somewhere out of the past it has wandered,
From old Wellington, Nelson and Drake,
From the men who have fought for old Britain
In the days when her life was the stake;
And it's here with us now in our struggle
As it was with our forefathers then,
This wonderful mighty possession,
The spirit of Britain's men.

THE HOME-COMING

They are coming back in thousands,
Men who went away to fight
Men full rich in manhood's splendour
Men who went to fight for right.
Now they're coming back all broken
Broken in the toils of war;
And they've lost their health and vigor,
Lost them on a foreign shore.

Back they come, they're maimed and wounded;
What they've suffered Heaven knows,
Yet they're smiling still and ever
In their eyes the fire still glows.
Men who've shed their blood for Britain,
Men who've fought 'gainst Freedom's foe,
What a service you have rendered,
What a debt to you we owe.

Are we going to talk of giving
Speak of charity to these
Who have faced hell in the open
Sailed through many bloody seas.
Shame on him who talks of giving—
Theirs the giving and not ours,
For if all we had were offered,
'Twere but dew drops given for showers.

Were you present at St. Julien
And at Vimy Ridge as well,
Did you fight at Ypres Salient
Where a million bullets fell?
If so then you'll know the reason
Why we praise the boys who were,
Why we think that nothing's too good
For the boys who suffered there.

Some have lost what nature gave them,
Arms and limbs they'll use no more,
Lost them in that land called "No man's"
Where the bullets rent and tore.
Some will never more see daylight,
Looking out of sightless eyes
Ever groping through the darkness,
Seeing neither sun nor skies.

O proud Canada, pray listen!
These are your boys brave and true,
Boys so big of heart and faithful,
Boys who've spilt their blood for you.
Are you going to do your duty
To the boys who're coming back,
Share with them out of your plenty,
So that they may nothing lack.

Elle He